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ABSTRACT

This guide addresses itself to elementary school teachers who may have Vietnamese and/or Cambodian children in their classes. The guide gives pointers on how to establish and maintain communication with the children and emphasizes the important role the teacher will play in the children's happiness and success in this country. The following suggestions are made: (1) use the services of a Vietnamese-speaking teacher or teacher aide, if one is present in the school; (2) use peer group instruction in the child's language wherever possible; (3) both English-speaking teachers and students in class would do well to learn a little Vietnamese or Cambodian; (4) use simple and basic English in talking with the child; and (5) teach him English as a second language as efficiently and as rapidly as possible. An annotated bibliography follows the text. (Author/TL)

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Indochinese Refugee Education Guides

#1
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION SERIES: On Keeping Lines of Communication with Indochinese Children Open

In late spring of 1975 some 120,000 Vietnamese and some 4,000 Cambodians came to the United States seeking refuge. Following a period of time ranging from a few days to several months in a temporary resettlement camp, by August some 70,000 had accepted the sponsorship of an American community. The refugee children have become a part of our schools this fall.

Elementary teachers in communities sponsoring refugees will have a significant role in the education of the younger Vietnamese children. The teacher will be one of the first friends the Vietnamese child will have. Vietnamese children already hold their unknown teacher in high esteem -- it is part of the Vietnamese culture to value the teacher only slightly less than one's parents. The type of response made by the American elementary teacher to this respect will largely determine how happy and successful the child will be in his new country.

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Elementary teachers in this country will know very well that their first line of responsibility to the Vietnamese children entering their classrooms is to make them feel as welcome, as comfortable, and as successful as possible from the first moment they are there. The following suggestions may be helpful to you in working with Indochinese youngsters:

Keep lines of communication open between teacher and student.

1. Use the services of a Vietnamese-speaking teacher or teacher aide, if one is present in the school. To know that there is someone nearby who can respond to the child in his own language can be a benefit well-justifying the expense. The bilingual staff member

is good insurance that the child and the school can communicate while the child is learning English.

2. Use peer group instruction in the child's language wherever possible. In some circumstances schools will be receiving a number of Vietnamese children of the same age, some of whom may demonstrate significant bilingual ability. The Vietnamese child who is bilingual can be useful. The use of his talents will do much for his self-esteem and sense of success.

3. Both English-speaking teachers and students in class would do well to learn a little Vietnamese or Cambodian. The child's willingness to make a real effort to learn English will be enhanced if he sees his teacher and other students interested in and willing to learn a few words of his language. Going through the process of learning a foreign language, even a small part of it, will increase teachers' and peers' understanding of and patience with the Indochinese child in his first weeks in an English-speaking school. English speakers will be most interested in learning, for example, Vietnamese greetings and other courtesy phrases, and names of objects and ideas important to both teacher and child. Further, basic directions and information given by teachers to children might well be learned in Vietnamese. More important than what or how much Vietnamese the teacher is willing to learn is the willingness of the American teacher to extend him/herself for the Vietnamese child.

4. Use simple and basic English in talking with the child. Teachers can assist the Vietnamese child who has learned a small amount of English by keeping her own statements to the child simple and basic and, as much as possible, consistent with the English the child has mastered. Teachers should avoid as much as possible using slang, figurative language, long and complex sentences, and a variety of words for one item when talking to a student with limited command of English.

5. Teach him English as a second language as efficiently and as rapidly as possible. Teaching English to students as a second or foreign lang-

uage is a complex teaching skill optimally performed by a trained specialist. Because some schools do not have such a specialist on their staffs, it will be necessary for regular classroom teachers to carry responsibility for teaching English as a second language.

The National Indochinese Clearinghouse has a forthcoming bulletin describing in-service education and special resources to help teachers develop some of the skills utilized by English as a Second Language (ESL) specialists.

Teachers who are assigned the responsibility of teaching English to non-English-speaking Vietnamese children should plan to follow these suggested procedures:

- Seek help. A telephone call to the Indochinese Clearinghouse will result in recommended materials and consultative help.
- Assume -- very wisely -- that a staff member who can effectively teach English as a second language will be a valuable (even necessary) resource for many American children as well as the Vietnamese. Use the need in this occasion to broaden your school's professional competencies.
- Do a careful survey of one or two basic reference materials on teaching English as a second language.
- Investigate the possibility of getting the services of an ESL specialist to work with classroom teachers to conduct teacher education, construct curriculum, select sound material.
- Consult with members of the bilingual education staff who have faced many of the same situations with children in their programs. Though their program will necessarily have to be adapted for the special needs of Vietnamese children, their understandings and background can be very helpful.

REFERENCES

1. Abrahams, Roger D. and Rudolph C. Troike, eds. Language and Cultural

Diversity in American Education. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

This anthology of essays contains among its sections: The Problem, which is concerned with the teaching of linguistically and culturally different students; Cultures in Education, emphasizing the importance of the educator in helping children of all backgrounds through a better understanding of those various cultures; Language, which presents basic information concerning language acquisition, grammar, competence and performance, dialects, and the history of the English language; Sociolinguistics, dealing with the role of language in social interaction and with the effects of bilingualism and multilingualism.

2. Finocchiaro, Mary. English as a Second Language: From Theory to Practice. New York: Regents, 1974. $3.25 Paperback.

Newly-revised practical guide to curriculum planning, lesson planning, adaptation of materials and language testing. Discusses specific techniques for teaching pronunciation, grammar, reading and writing. Appendix contains useful definitions, an extensive bibliography.

3. Duong Thanh Binh. A Handbook for Teachers of Vietnamese Students: Hints for Dealing with Cultural Differences in Schools. Arlington, Va.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1975.

Brief description of cultural problems likely to be faced by Vietnamese children entering American schools, and suggestions for teachers about dealing with these problems.

4. Nguyen Hy Quang. English-Vietnamese Phrasebook with Useful Word List (for Vietnamese Speakers). Arlington, Va.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1975.

Duong Thanh Binh and William Gage. Vietnamese-English Phrasebook with Useful Word List (for English Speakers). Arlington, Va.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1975.

Phrasebooks designed to get both Americans and Vietnamese through initial stages of contact. Accompanying tapes are available for both books. The Vietnamese-English Phrasebook has a pronunciation guide to aid the American in speaking Vietnamese.

5. Robson, Barbara and Kent Sutherland. A Selected Annotated Bibliography for Teaching English to Speakers of Vietnamese. Arlington, Va.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1975.

A 300-item bibliography covering basic texts, audiovisual aids, literacy materials, testing materials, cross-cultural references, etc., for both children and adults.

6. Saville, Muriel and Rudolph C. Troike. A Handbook of Bilingual Education. Washington, D.C.: TESOL, 1971

Addressed to teachers and administrators, this handbook is a practical guide for those working in bilingual programs. The authors review the history and fundamental considerations of bilingual education and consider the linguistic, psychological, sociocultural, and pedagogical problems involved. Each section contains a good bibliography.

7. Saville-Troike, Muriel. "Teaching English as a Second Culture". In Crymes, Ruth and W.E. Norris, eds., On TESOL 74. Washington, D.C.: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 1975.

Discussion of the problems encountered by children from one culture being taught in the education system of another. Points out areas in which the teacher unwittingly places the child in conflict between his home and his school, and suggests guidelines for better communication and understanding between the teacher, the child and his parents.

8. Stevick, Earl W. Helping People Learn English. New York: Abingdon Press, 1957.

This is a small, down-to-earth, sane, sensible book which is expressly designed to acquaint the non-experienced native speaker of English with the ins and outs of teaching English as a second language. It gives general guidelines on teaching pronunciation, and an easy-to-understand introduction to the mechanics of pronunciation. The sections on teaching grammar are equally good.